

## Message Text

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ACTION AF-04

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FM AMEMBASSY ABIDJAN

TO AMEMBASSY ACCRA

INFO SECSTATE WASHDC 5991

AMEMBASSY TRIPOLI

AMEMBASSY LAGOS

AMEMBASSY BAMAKO

C O N F I D E N T I A L ABIDJAN 10062

LIMDIS

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: EFIN, AFDB, GH

SUBJECT: GHANAIAN CANDIDATE FOR PRESIDENCY OF AFDB

REF: DAKAR 2707

1. GHANAIAN AMBASSADOR C. C. LOKKO, PAYING FIRST COURTESY CALL AFTER PRESENTING CREDENTIALS, RAISED QUESTION OF CONTINUING CANDIDACY OF KWAME FORDWAR FOR PRESIDENCY OF AFRICAN DEVELOPMENT BANK (AFDB). IT WILL BE RECALLED (REFTEL) THAT FORDWAR RAN NECK-AND-NECK WITH LIBYAN CANDIDATE AT LAST AFDB ANNUAL MEETING IN DAKAR IN MAY, BUT NEITHER RECEIVED MAJORITY OF VOTES, DUE TO NIGERIAN ABSTENTION. AS RESULT, PRESIDENT LABIDI AGREED TO EXTEND FOR ONLY ONE YEAR. NEXT ANNUAL MEETING IS IN KINSHASA IN MAY.

2. LOKKO SAID HE HAD BEEN ACTIVE IN CAMPAIGNING FOR FORDWAR WHILE AMBASSADOR TO UPPER VOLTA AND NIGER AND KNEW FORDWAR WELL. AS FAR AS LOKKO KNOWS, GOG PLANS TO HAVE FORWARD RUN AGAIN, BUT HAS DONE NOTHING TO PROMOTE HIS CANDIDACY IN THE MONTHS SINCE DAKAR. WE ALSO UNDERSTAND THAT LIBYAN CANDIDATE, AFDB VICE PRESIDENT OMEISH, HAS RESIGNED FROM AFDB.; WE DO  
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NOT KNOW WHETHER HE IS STILL A CANDIDATE FOR PRESIDENT.

WE KNOW OF NO OTHER CANDIDATES AT THIS TIME, EXCEPT POSSIBLY LOUIS NEGRE, MALIAN VICE PRESIDENT OF AFDB.

3. IT WAS LOKKO'S VIEW THAT GOG WOULD NEED TO PROMOTE FORDWAR VIGOROUSLY IF IT WANTED HIM AS PRESIDENT. AMONG OTHER THINGS, IT WOULD BE USEFUL IF HE WERE "PROMOTED" TO MINISTER OF FINANCE SO AS TO HAVE THE TITLE, AND IT MIGHT BE USEFUL, HE SAID, FOR GOG TO SEND FORWARD HIMSELF AROUND, OR SEND OTHERS AROUND TO "TALK HIM UP". LOKKO ALSO THOUGHT IT WOULD BE APPROPRIATE FOR ACHEAMPONG TO APPROACH NEW NIGERIAN LEADERSHIP DIRECTLY TO SEEK THEIR SUPPORT (AND TRY TO BREAK THROUGH THE GHANAIAN-NIGERIAN "LOVE-HATE" RELATIONSHIP).

4. LOKKO ADDED, MOST CANDIDILY, HE THOUGHT FORDWAR WAS A BIT TOO HAUGHTY TO BE A GOOD CANDIDATE, AND THAT HE UNDERESTIMATED THE NEED FOR "POLITESSE" IN DEALING WITH THE FRANCOPHONES. NEVERTHELESS, LOKKO THOUGHT FORDWAR WOULD BE AN EXCELLENT AFDB PRESIDENT.

5. COMMENT: I PERSONALLY SHARE ALL OF LOKKO'S COMMENTS, BOTH AS TO FORDWAR'S QUALITIES AND AS TO NEED FOR AGGRESSIVE CAMPAIGN IF GOG WANTS HIM ELECTED. WHILE WE OBVIOUSLY CAN PLAY NO PART IN THIS MATTER, IT IS CLEARLY IMPORTANT FOR OUR INTERESTS IN THE BANK(AND THE FUND) THAT THEBANK HAVE A STRONG, WELL-QUALIFIED PRESIDENT. WOULD BE INTERESTED IN EMBASSY ACCRA'S NEWS AND VIEWS. SMITH

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